

MAXIMIZING CURB APPEAL MAINTAINING DESIRABLE PROPERTIES

By Mayor Gene Winstead

BLOOMINGTON RESIDENTS KNOW WHY this city is a great place to live and work. However, as the ownership of our single-family homes passes to the next generation, how do we maintain this pride in our community? Survey results from the City’s strategic planning process revealed that “maximizing the desirability of residential and commercial areas” was a top priority of residents. This was second only to “creating a community where residents and visitors are safe.” Clearly, maintaining and creating desirable neighborhoods is important for several reasons, including protecting property values, creating a sense of community and securing future economic vitality.

The nuisance control program is one way the City plays an active role in maintaining desirable neighborhoods. Systematic inspections are the primary way violations are discovered. A majority of the violations and orders for correction are accomplished through this process, but resident complaints are an important backup mechanism. Environmental Health investigates nearly 200 resident complaints each month, responding to reports of code violations, such as tall grass or weeds, abandoned vehicles, items stored in yards and deteriorated home exteriors.

More than 95 percent of all residential violations are corrected by

the property owner after a verbal or written notice is received. Inspectors spend a significant amount of time explaining the City’s requirements and the reasons behind them. This educational component results in only a small percentage of violations that needs to be resolved by fines or court appearances.

Because enforcement is the last resort, the City needs residents to help maintain neighborhoods. Talk to your neighbor or block captain if you see an issue in your neighborhood. Helping your neighbor recognize the problem and take corrective action before it gets out of hand is a much more effective way to build neighbor-to-neighbor relationships than by calling in a complaint.

Because backyard diplomacy does not always work, call the Environmental Health Division at 952-563-8934, e-mail a complaint to envhealth@ci.bloomington.mn.us or use our online form at www.ci.bloomington.mn.us, keywords: Nuisance form. Give the inspector time to observe the violation and talk to the property owner to resolve the issue. Resolutions occasionally take a while, due to unforeseen complexities of the issues faced. Your patience with the process is appreciated.



Ten years ago, when Bloomington started systematically inspecting residential neighborhoods, it was an innovative concept. Now, many first-tier suburbs are following our example. This year, Bloomington started systematic inspection of commercial properties modeled on the concepts learned from the residential nuisance program. In the first three months, systematic commercial inspections resulted in corrections of more than 140 violations.

With more than 25,000 single-family homes, 10,000 multi-family homes and 1,900 commercial properties in Bloomington, nuisance control is a big job. We need your help in keeping the city looking great and making Bloomington’s neighborhoods desirable places to live, work and play. For more information, visit the City’s Web site at www.ci.bloomington.mn.us, keywords: Environmental Health.

2008 GENERAL FUND BUDGET COUNCIL APPROVES PRELIMINARY BUDGET AND LEVY

AT ITS SEPTEMBER MEETING, THE CITY Council approved a preliminary general operating fund budget of \$52,040,084, a 4.73 percent increase from the 2007 budget of \$49,690,289.

For a Bloomington resident with a median-valued home of \$247,900, the **cost for City services would decrease**

\$0.83 per month in 2008 for a monthly payment of \$61.77. The median-valued home averaged a 1.3 percent increase in market value in 2007, up \$3,100 from 2006. This has resulted in some tax levy shift to commercial properties as their values have risen at a higher rate than median residential values. Because the

The Truth in Taxation
Hearing is **Monday, December 3, at 6 p.m.** in the Council Chambers at Civic Plaza.

total value of city property increased, the overall tax capacity rate for the City will decrease for taxes payable in 2008. The approval of a preliminary levy of \$42,053,864 for 2008, a 4.97 percent increase from 2007, in part, anticipates the possible loss of market value credit from the state in 2007.

The preliminary levy can be reduced, but not increased, before final adoption in December. This allows the City to adjust for anticipated 2008 economically-sensitive resources, including a potential state reduction in market value credit during the 2008 Legislative Session. Any reduction is based on the projected financial conditions in the state’s November economic forecast. If the 2008 levy increase is approved at this preliminary level, the average annual increase in the City’s levy from 1994 - 2008 will be 3.4 percent.

City staff uses a five-year planning model that considers both short-term and future needs of our community to recommend a preliminary levy.

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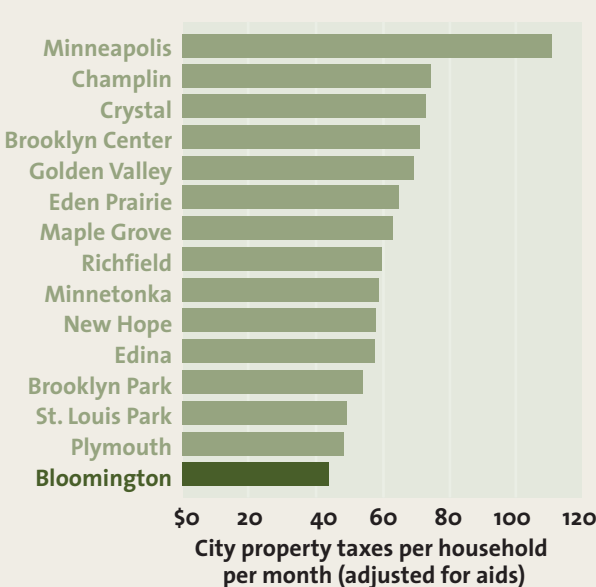
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The City of Bloomington complies with all applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its services, programs, or activities. Upon request, accommodation will be provided to allow individuals with disabilities to participate in all City of Bloomington services, programs, and activities. The City has designated coordinators to facilitate compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), and to coordinate compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as mandated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations. For more information, contact the Human Services Division, City of Bloomington, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road, Bloomington, MN 55431-3027; (952)563-8733 (Voice); 952-563-8740 (TTY).

Upon request, this information can be available in Braille, large print, audio tape and/or electronic format.

BLOOMINGTON RANKS WELL HENNEPIN COUNTY TAX RATE COMPARISON

In a 2007 comparison of 15 communities in Hennepin County with more than 20,000 residents, the average household cost of services in terms of property taxes and property tax aids (when adjusted for fiscal disparities)



showed Bloomington ranking lowest. The average household, including single-family dwellings, condominiums, townhomes and apartments in Bloomington paid \$44.34 per month in property taxes to the City.